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LETTER DATED 11 JUNE 1998 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 11 June 1998, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

98-16562 (E) 120698

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Annex

Letter dated 11 June 1998 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), I attach the seventeenth monthly report on operations of the Stabilization Force (SFOR). I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

Appendix

Seventeenth monthly report to the Security Council on the operations of the Stabilization Force

1. There are approximately 35,000 troops currently deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, with contributions from all countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and from 20 non-NATO countries.

2. Over the reporting period (21 April-20 May), the Stabilization Force (SFOR) continued to conduct surveillance and reconnaissance by means of ground and air patrols. Approximately 2,200 sorties were flown by combat aircraft, with the SFOR helicopter fleet flying approximately 150 hours.

3. Over the reporting period, SFOR continued to secure the transmission towers used by Srpska Radio Television (SRT) at Duga Nijva, Udrigovo and Veliki Zep in Multinational Division North (MND(N)), and at Trebevic and Leotar in MND (South-East). In line with the SRT Restructuring Agreement which was concluded by the Office of the High Representative in February, SFOR began a phased operation on 20 May to withdraw from the five towers, withdrawing first from the sites at Leotar, Udrigovo and Duga Nijva. Following withdrawal, SFOR will contribute to ensuring SRT compliance with the Restructuring Agreement by media monitoring, routine patrols of the tower sites and unannounced technical inspections of the SRT tower equipment. SFOR and personnel of the Office of the High Representative retain free, unrestricted and immediate access to the towers.

4. SFOR has stepped up its operations near the border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in order to use its existing authorities under Annex I A of the Peace Agreement to help ensure compliance with the prohibition on the transport of weapons established by Security Council resolution 1160 (1998).

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

5. The parties remain generally compliant with most military provisions of the Peace Agreement across the whole area of operations. However, over the reporting period, the return of refugees and displaced persons led to increased tension in a number of areas, most notably in the Federation, in Derventa and Drvar and in MND(North) and MND(South-West).

6. On 23 April, at Derventa, violence occurred at a Catholic mass which had been organized in the village. Stones and Molotov cocktails were thrown by a crowd of approximately 400 at SFOR buses transporting Bosnian Croats to the village to celebrate mass. No injuries were reported. SFOR troops and members of the United Nations International Police Task Force (IPTF) succeeded in preventing the crowd from entering the church, which was subsequently evacuated, and the Bosnian Croats were escorted from the village by SFOR troops.

7. On 24 April, in Drvar, Bosnian Serbs and Croats clashed at a former Bosnian Croat Army barracks in the town, which was being used as a resettlement site for Bosnian Serb refugees. Bosnian Croats took over the Bosnian Serb

Communal Council building, and set fire to vehicles belonging to international organizations and to a number of buildings in the town, including the United Nations civilian affairs offices and the IPTF station. The Bosnian Serb mayor of the town was injured. SFOR troops dispersed the rioters, and officials of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) subsequently escorted the Bosnian Serb refugees from Drvar to Banja Luka.

8. In addition, during the last week of April, 15 explosions and arson attacks in Stolac in MND(South-East) destroyed at least 6 Bosniac-owned houses, bringing to 31 the number of houses destroyed in the area since 1 January. An additional 12 were damaged over the same period.

9. Over the reporting period SFOR conducted a total of 301 inspections of military weapons storage sites: 92 Bosniac; 70 Bosnian Croat; 120 Bosnian Serb; and 19 Federation. The following weapons were confiscated: from the Bosnian Serbs, three 90 mm tank shells and six hand grenades; from the Bosniacs, 1,600 rounds of 7.9 mm ammunition and 4,420 rounds of 7.62 mm ammunition; and from the Bosnian Croats, five 82 mm mortar rounds. In accordance with SFOR policy, those confiscated weapons will be destroyed, after a period of time to allow for appeals.

10. SFOR supported 64 IPTF-led inspections of local police stations over the reporting period, 23 in the Republika Srpska and 41 in the Federation. During those inspections, the following weapons were confiscated: from the Federation 24 rifles, 2 pistols, 26 grenades, 13 mines, 1 long-barrelled weapon and 4,429 small arms rounds; from the Republika Srpska, 1 rifle, 15 grenades, 3 long-barrelled weapons and 79 small arms rounds.

11. Over the reporting period SFOR and IPTF dismantled 10 unauthorized checkpoints, 1 in the Federation and 9 in the Republika Srpska.

12. SFOR monitored 1,034 training and movement activities over the reporting period: 244 Bosniac; 42 Bosnian Croat, 648 Bosnian Serb and 100 Federation. Owing to non-compliance with the implementation of the common licence plate programme (see para. 14 below), bans have been imposed until further notice on the 121st and 820th Bosniac Army Brigade, on the 2nd Bosnian Croat Guard Brigade, on the Bosnian Croat instruction centre and on the reserve units of the 512th Bosnian Serb Brigade.

13. SFOR monitored 608 demining operations: 236 Bosniac; 174 Bosnian Croat; 184 Bosnian Serb; and 14 Federation. A total of 189 anti-tank mines, 1,290 anti-personnel mines and 105 items of unexploded ordnance were removed. There are currently no bans imposed on the entity armed forces for non-compliance with demining operations. However, a training and movement ban was placed on the Bosnian Serb Reserve Forces in MND(South-West), from 3 to 19 May, for non-compliance with countermining operations.

14. SFOR continues to monitor and to encourage compliance with the common licence plate programme. While the civilian implementation of the programme has been delayed until 31 August, military implementation began on 1 May. Consequently, SFOR has monitored all routine patrols and inspections of military convoys in Bosnian and Herzegovina for compliance with the programme. As

reported in paragraph 12, bans have been placed on a number of units because of non-compliance.

15. The overall ban imposed upon all activities of the Republika Srpska Police Anti-Terrorist Brigade has not yet been lifted, owing to the Brigade's continuing non-compliance with the instructions of the SFOR Commander. However, following a complete review by SFOR of Unit 5 of the Anti-Terrorist Brigade in Doboj, it was decided to re-certify the unit. Consequently, on 11 May, SFOR issued weapons permit identification cards, weapons and ammunition to 103 specialist policemen in Doboj, together with 10 vehicles and various types of secure communication equipment.

16. On 14 May, SFOR and IPTF conducted joint compliance inspections of all civil and specialist police premises in the Pale area, in the wake of the recent move of the Republika Srpska Government from Pale to Banja Luka. As authorized under the provisions of the Peace Agreement, IPTF, supported by SFOR, inspected civil law enforcement facilities, while SFOR troops inspected six other facilities in Pale to ensure compliance by the Specialist Police. The Republika Srpska local authorities and the Bosnian Serb army and police representatives were consulted at all stages of the operation in order to verify the legitimacy of all personnel and activities, and all international organizations and agencies were notified. Five military police officers from the Bosnian Serb 505th Brigade were detained in the Pale police station because they had no identity cards, and their arms were confiscated. Inspections of 15 public buildings and facilities in Pale were also conducted, without incident.

Cooperation with international organizations

17. Within its capabilities, SFOR continues to provide assistance to the international organizations in theatre, working routinely with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Office of the High Representative, IPTF, the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and UNHCR.

18. In the light of recent violent disturbances related to the return of displaced persons and refugees, most notably in Drvar at the end of April, the SFOR Commander, the High Representative and other principals agreed on the need to establish a working-level mechanism to forestall future such disturbances elsewhere. Accordingly, the Office of the High Representative has set up an Inter-Agency Planning Group to enhance cooperation between the various organizations in theatre. SFOR will participate in the Group, together with the Office of the High Representative, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, IPTF, OSCE, UNHCR and the European Community's Monitoring Mission. The inaugural meeting of the Planning Group was held on 7 May 1998. In parallel with the establishment of the Group, and in order to assist in the return of displaced persons and refugees, SFOR also established action groups at theatre and MND level. Their mission is to harmonize and direct SFOR efforts to assist displaced persons and refugees, and to provide the linkages between SFOR and the theatre and regional local structures of the Reconstruction and Return Task Force and UNHCR. In addition, SFOR will establish a common return database, and conduct information operations on themes related to displaced persons and

refugees. It will also continue to conduct surveys to support returns of displaced persons and refugees.

19. SFOR continues to support the installation phase of the municipal elections, through the OSCE Election Results Implementation Committees at national and local levels, and through the provision of a secure environment, area security and support to IPTF.

20. SFOR also continues to provide assistance to the Office of the High Representative in the field of civil air traffic, most notably assisting in the development of operations at Sarajevo airport and continuing to work to enable Mostar airport to open to commercial traffic in the near future.

Outlook

21. Returns of displaced persons and refugees are likely to continue to be accompanied by acts of intimidation and violence. SFOR will help ensure the provision of a secure environment to facilitate returns.

22. The detailed planning is now in place for the seamless continuation of SFOR beyond the end of its current mandate on 20 June, subject to an appropriate resolution of the Security Council.